

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus ~~for controlling use of content under a predetermined condition~~, comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring first user identification information for a first client, ~~the first client being an apparatus or~~ user requesting use of the content;

registration means for registering the first user identification information ~~acquired from the first client~~, and for replacing the ~~changing the registered~~ first user identification information with a second user identification information to register a second user requesting use of the content;

change limitation means for preventing the registration means from further replacing ~~changing~~ the second user ~~first~~ identification information in accordance with a limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information;

limitation modifying means for modifying the limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information; and

usage control means for, in response to the request for use of the content issued by the second user ~~first client~~, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the second user ~~first~~ identification information is currently registered.

2. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means performs registration in response to a request issued by the first user client.

3. (Previously Presented) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means performs new registration only when a current number of registrations is smaller than a predetermined maximum allowable number of registrations.

4. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the registration means stores, together with the first user identification information, an invalidation flag for controlling provision of a service to the first user client; and

the usage control means limits the use of the content by the first user client if the invalidation flag associated with the first user client is set.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limitation is a maximum number of times user identification information can be replaced.

7. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limitation is a predetermined amount of time that must expire between replacing user identification information.

8. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the registered first user identification information ~~for the first client~~ is

replaced with the second user identification information ~~for a second client~~, the change limitation means requests the second user ~~client~~ to perform a particular operation.

9. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the registered first user identification information is replaced with the second user identification information ~~for a second client~~, the change limitation means requests submission of change permission information from the second user ~~client~~.

10. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the change limitation means charges fees for changing the maximum number of times user identification information can be replaced.

11. (Currently Amended) A content usage control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the limitation on replacing user information is modified the change limitation means requests submission of change permission information from a different apparatus or a manager.

12. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method ~~for controlling use of content under a predetermined condition~~, comprising steps of:

acquiring first user identification information for a first ~~client~~, ~~the first client being an apparatus or~~ user requesting use of the content;

registering the first user identification information ~~acquired from the first client~~;

replacing the changing the registered first user identification information with a second user identification information to register a second user requesting use of the content;

preventing further replacement of ~~changes to~~ the registered second user ~~first~~ identification information in accordance with a limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information;

modifying the limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information; and

in response to the request for use of the content issued by the second user ~~first-client~~, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the ~~first~~ second user identification information is currently registered.

13. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein registration is performed in response to a request issued by the first user ~~client~~.

14. (Previously Presented) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein new registration is performed only when a current number of registrations is smaller than a predetermined maximum allowable number of registrations.

15. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein an invalidation flag for controlling provision of a service to the first user ~~client~~ is stored together with the first user identification information; and

the use of the content by the first user ~~client~~ is limited, if the invalidation flag associated with the first user ~~client~~ is set.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein the limitation is a maximum number of times user identification information can be replaced.

18. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein the limitation is a predetermined amount of time that must expire between

replacing user identification information.

19. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein when the registered first user identification information ~~for the first client~~ is replaced with the second user identification information for a second client, the second user client is requested to perform a particular operation.

20. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12, wherein, when the registered first user identification information is replaced with the second user identification information ~~for a second client~~, submission of change permission information is requested from the second user client ~~or a manager~~.

21. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 17, further comprising charging fees for changing the maximum number of times user identification information can be replaced.

22. (Currently Amended) A content usage control method according to claim 12 [[16]], wherein when the limitation on replacing user information is modified, submission of change permission information is requested from a different apparatus or a manager.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing processor readable instructions for causing a processor to execute a method ~~process of controlling use of content under a predetermined condition, the process comprising the steps of:~~

acquiring first user identification information for a first client, ~~the first client being an apparatus or user requesting use of the content;~~

registering the first user identification information ~~acquired from the first client;~~

replacing the ~~changing the registered~~ first user identification information with a second user identification information to register a second user requesting use of the content;

preventing further replacement of ~~changes to~~ the registered second user first identification information in accordance with a limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information;

modifying the limitation on replacing user ~~changing~~ identification information; and

in response to the request for use of the content issued by the second user ~~first~~ client, determining whether the use of the content is allowed on the basis of whether the ~~first~~ second user identification information is currently registered.